



BILL 18-22, NOISE CONTROL - LEAF REMOVAL – AMENDMENTS
Testimony from Jon Lobenstine, Director of Agronomy

Good afternoon and thank you for allowing me to provide testimony today. My name is Jon Lobenstine, and I am Director of Agronomy for Montgomery County Revenue Authority and Past President of the Mid Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents.

As our golf courses have started to delve into the world of battery powered equipment, I offer this regarding the blowers: there are many benefits, including: much simpler operation and training for staff, zero fuel emissions and less noise for the operators, and fewer mechanical parts that require repair or maintenance. For these reasons, on behalf of both MCRA's 9 golf courses and speaking collectively for all 27 public and private golf courses in Montgomery County, we support the intent of Bill 18-22.

We understand the importance of this bill, but considering the average golf course consists of over 150 acres of land, some over 400 acres, the noise impacts from blower use on a golf course are minimal since most of the areas we maintain are well away from residential areas, and maintenance is typically performed well away from golfers.

Battery and blower technology, while it continues to improve, is still not directly comparable to gas-powered blowers, but we're getting closer! Blowlers with the longest run time are not powerful enough, and the blowlers with the strongest output for maximum efficiency do not last long enough.

Blowing leaves is relatively easy, but golf courses have some other unique uses for blowlers. Aeration season requires us to blow and loosen soil that's often smashed into the turfgrass canopy, and we need turbo mode all day using many blowlers for cleanup. The unique topography and variability in playing surfaces including sand bunkers offer additional challenges.

Our golf courses are already starting to make the change to battery blowlers for some uses, but it is not a comprehensive solution for us yet.

Based on the limited noise impact to our neighbors and the gap in technology, we are requesting the council consider a 3-year delay in the full implementation of this bill for golf courses to allow battery and blower technology to improve. We do see the light at the end of the tunnel, and we look forward to implementing this change when the timing is right!

Thank you.